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It is reported, on apparently good authority, that the retail store of the Boston Wall-Paper Company is to be closed up at once, and the expense of doing a losing business stopped by the National Wall-Paper Company, its present owners. Mr. Burgess, the manager, is understood to have a contract not yet expired, and will probably be utilized in some other branch of the big combine. Mr. Sinclair, the New Hampshire politician, railway magnate and brewer, is said to have considerable more experience and less money on account of his backing the Boston Wall-Paper Company.

THE marked advance in the public taste of this country has so stimulated the manufacturers of high-class artistic productions that the art of furniture, no less than that of many other arts, exhibits the finest efforts of modern skill and machinery. In our January issue we published an illustrated article, describing the Spring Styles in Furniture, to give our readers an idea of the magnitude and variety of the various kinds of tables, chairs, cabinets, buffets, writing tables, desks, etc., made by some of the foremost manufacturers in this country. A continuation of this article is published in our present issue, from which it will be seen that the present styles favor more or less ornate reproductions of the French and English eighteenth century styles. Articles of this kind are of the greatest possible assistance to dealers in the selection of their goods, as well as serving to keep the readers of the magazine advised as to the latest designs in fashionable furniture. The various pieces illustrated serve as models of the various styles, and are recommended to those who wish to furnish comfortably, economically and artistically. Too much cannot be said in favor of the attention now being paid to the selection of household surroundings, and there can be no doubt that during the last ten years THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER is responsible to a large extent for the true regeneration of art that has been made in American homes.

WHEN a manufacturer "points with pride" to his line of furniture, and says that it has been produced with the main object of finding a ready sale in the market, the chances are that it contains not a few monstrosities, or a variety of "art" goods utterly unworthy of the name. While the world, in general terms, is constantly growing more refined in

its tastes, it will be found in practice that the multitude has but very little idea of art, because the sense of form is always a rare endowment, and millions are unable to distinguish between the vulgar mechanical production and that which is characterized by really good design and construction. The abnormal, the eccentric, the commonplace, which the salesman eloquently describes as "the artistic and the unique," are the things most readily bought, and it is because of this that furniture is so largely made by machinery. As long as the people are satisfied with the productions of the lathe and jigsaw, so long will machine-made furniture triumph, and that which is done by hand, by the skilled artist, will be passed by in favor of the cheaper and more showy article.

While it will be found that the man who can put the cheapest goods on the market will succeed in building up the biggest trade, in the long run the one who makes the best goods will be the most successful. Furniture manufacturers owe a duty to the country, to encourage the revival of artistic taste, for it is by the immediate environment of the people that the most impressive lessons in art can be taught. To assist in making the country eminent in art is to invite unparalleled prosperity in the furniture business.

THE MICHIGAN ARTIZAN, by way of revenge on the New York Furniture Exposition, for not getting its usual advertisement for the current Exposition, has in a late issue made a scurrilous attack on the organization and its promoters, including the efficient and gentlemanly secretary, Mr. Charles E. Spratt. The writer is one of those smart Alecks, who can smell a fox where there is none. His blatant charges of vanity and mismanagement are simply an empty tin pot, which he has tied to the tail of the *Artizan* for the gratification of seeing that publication amuse its readers by his antics.

The various exhibitions have always been directed by level-headed men of business, who have acted on the common sense principle of only expending what they have received. There are no liabilities beyond the rent of the building, the secretary's salary, and the printing and advertising. They charge the exhibitors so much for space occupied to meet those expenses. They have not asked credit from anyone. They couldn't do so, for a business organization, without capital or property, cannot borrow money. Thus, there are no liabilities. The rot expressed about "financial disaster" is a straw to tickle the ears of fools.

The insinuation that Mr. Spratt, the secretary, organized the furniture exposition for his own benefit would be flattering, if true. Any man who could induce 250 furniture manufacturers to get up a costly exhibit solely for his benefit would be too clever a man to be at large in any community. The statement that he did so is an insult to the intelligence of the trade, and is contrary to fact. The trade organized the exposition association primarily for its own benefit, and the association employed Mr. Spratt as secretary for reasons of energy, ability, honesty and fitness for the position. Mr. Spratt has proved to the satisfaction of the association that their confidence in him was not misplaced. The success of the various expositions was largely due to his executive ability and untiring energy. He is the right man in the right place.

WE beg to call the attention of our readers to our revised catalogue of Books for Architects, Artists, Designers and Decorators, published on pages 193 and 194 of the present number. The eight books described on page 193 refer to historical ornament and decorative design, including the Raguenet drawings of architectural sculpture, and the sculptured figure ornaments in the Imperial Court Museum of Natural History at Vienna. On page 194 are books referring to interior decoration, giving perspective views of richly furnished interiors, such as "The Old Ansbach Castle," "Furnishings at the Vienna Jubilee Exposition of Industry," "The Furnishing of the Manor House," exhibited also at Vienna, and perspective views of interiors in various styles by Jean Pape. Then follow the two most noted historical works on furniture, namely: "Das Möbel," by Messrs. Lambert & Stahl of Stuttgart, and "The Illustrated History of Furniture," by Frederick Litchfield. There are two books on Modern Vienna furniture, and models of art furniture in the Rococo style, two works on historical furniture in the Empire style, and the works on art furniture by

Deville and Villeneuve, and the work on Italian wood sculpture by Frullini, which is a masterpiece of its kind. Then follow several works on drapery, upholstery and art embroidery, giving magnificent specimens of decorated textile fabrics. The list winds up with ten works devoted to modern decorative painting, the work on figurative allegorical composition being the finest of its kind published, containing the finest examples of modern fresco painting by the greatest European artists. The books referring to church decoration, fresco painting and plastic ornaments will prove extremely valuable to decorators.

This list has been thoroughly revised, and the books referred to are without exception, the very finest published on the various branches of decorative art they refer to. No modern decorator can afford to be without a copy of each of the thirty-seven books mentioned.

SOME of our English contemporaries take occasion from time to time to criticise American furniture, referring in a humorous way to "the American craze for the latest Parisian novelties," and apparently appreciating the originality of "Cousin Jonathan," whoever he may be, for advertising goods in old English and sixteenth century finish. Exception is frequently taken to the loud, bellicose, not to say blatant creations in the way of sofas and chairs "draped and upholstered in the most lavish manner with velvets, silks and other decorative textiles." Great effort is made to convey the impression that the furniture most in demand in this country is made in the style of "the Rocky Mountain Renaissance, and similar elegant monstrosities, all of which, it is needless to say, would find but scant favor in the furnishing showroom of the mother country."

While it is true that our cheap markets have been flooded with a species of work which does not at all represent the true taste of the country, a state of things which exists to as great a degree in England and France, as well as in the United States; yet a late issue of an English furniture journal states that in England, "all true lovers of the furnishing trade must deplore the ascendancy of the bazaar element over that sober line of business which is adapted by the genuine cabinet maker, as anyone may see who goes the round of the West End windows just now. This tendency to drop into the 'finiken' is constantly growing. Staid old firms, who, a few years ago, would have shuddered at any attempt to rival the artifices of the drapers, now display and ticket tempting trifles in the most barefaced manner."

"Time was when the latest *chef-d'œuvre* of the workshop was duly honored by exhibition in the window; now some cheap bedroom suite, as 'advertised,' is most likely to be seen to the front—may be some tawdry callbird to catch the untutored customer, who foolishly thinks the least price means best value."

Loud denunciations are made against hall stands, and the great amount of woodwork which has been rendered unnecessary by the castings of iron founders. "Cast iron substitutes have taken the place of wooden mantel-pieces, and the Sheraton washstand is superseded by a contrivance in wire and tin and iron. From one quarter and another, much of the furnishing trade has fallen into the hands of men who are prepared to make 'up to date' articles."

Can such things exist in a country so righteous in matters of art as to blame American artificers for not reaching their high standard of excellence? Alas! Mankind is the same in all ages and countries. The tares in the wheat will ever be mixed up together. In this eclectic age it is impossible to declare that any new style exists at present anywhere. With the improved means of communication between widely separated industrial centres, the whole civilized world is as one country, and merchants and manufacturers can select the best or the worst examples of art work in furniture of all times. As a matter of fact, all the styles introduced in the last ten years in Europe and America are resurrections of eighteenth century ideas, but there is one great merit in modern furniture that should not be overlooked, and that is that there never was a time when so great an amount of house furnishings, including wall-papers and draperies, could be obtained with so small an expenditure, and fresh and more economical developments in these desirable articles are constantly being made. The people are the style nowadays!